

Message Text

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ACTION EA-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01 INR-10

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 HA-05 CU-04

AID-05 OMB-01 PC-01 SY-05 A-01 /077 W

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R 170845Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6904

INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY MANILA

AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE

AMEMBASSY TOKYO

AMCONSUL MEDAN

AMCONSUL SURABAYA

USIA WASHDC

CINCPAC HONOLULU

C O N F I D E N T I A L JAKARTA 2202

E.O. 11652: XGDS-1

TAGS: PINT, PINS, ID, SOPN

SUBJECT: ITB RECTOR FIRED

REF: A) JAKARTA 2081 (DTG 150930Z FEB 78)

1. SUMMARY: THE RECTOR OF ITB HAS BEEN FIRED. THE PHYSICAL SITUATION AT ITB REMAINS STATIC, AND THERE HAS BEEN NO RESPONSE TO THE RECTOR'S OUSTER SO FAR FROM EITHER STUDENTS OR FACULTY. TROOPS ARE TO REMAIN AT ITB UNTIL AFTER THE MPR SESSION, AND REGISTRATION FOR THE UNIVERSITY'S NEXT TERM IS NOW SET FOR FEBRUARY 21. THE "ACADEMIC STRIKE" APPEARS TO HAVE SPREAD TO THE OTHER MAJOR BANDUNG CAMPUSES. END SUMMARY.

2. THE EMBATTLED RECTOR OF BANDUNG TECHNICAL INSTITUTE

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(ITB), PROF. DR. ISKANDAR ALISYAHBANA, HAS BEEN FIRED. ALTHOUGH THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF HIS OUSTER WAS MADE YESTERDAY, HIS REMOVAL WAS EFFECTIVE FEBRUARY 14. UNTIL A PERMANENT REPLACEMENT IS NAMED, ITB WILL BE GOVERNED BY A COMMITTEE ("RECTORIUM") OF FOUR SENIOR FACULTY MEMBERS UNDER THE GUIDANCE OF THE DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR HIGHER EDUCATION (AND FORMER ITB RECTOR) PROF. DR. DODY TISNA

AMIDJAJA. ALISYAHBANA WILL REMAIN AT ITB AS A SENIOR FACULTY MEMBER.

3. DIR. GEN. DODY TOLD THE PRESS THAT ALISYAHBANA'S REMOVAL WAS "NOT VERY STRANGE" AND WAS NOT THE DIRECT RESULT OF THE CURRENT UNREST AT ITB. ALISYAHBANA'S OUSTER, ACCORDING TO DODY, STEMMED FROM HIS "INEFFECTIVENESS IN THE ACADEMIC FIELD" AND INABILITY TO GUARANTEE THAT A PROPER CLIMATE FOR EDUCATION COULD BE MAINTAINED. DODY ALSO SAID THE DECISION TO FIRE THE RECTOR WAS MADE BY THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND CULTURE SYARIF THAYEB AND DID NOT REQUIRE PRESIDENT SUHARTO'S SPECIFIC PRIOR APPROVAL. THERE HAS BEEN NO REPORTED RESPONSE TO THE REMOVAL OF THE RECTOR YET FROM EITHER THE STUDENTS OR FACULTY OF ITB.

4. THE PHYSICAL SITUATION AT ITB REMAINS CALM, WITH TROOPS STILL IN PLACE AROUND THE CAMPUS AND FEW OR NO STUDENTS INSIDE. PRIOR TO THE ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE RECTOR'S DISMISSAL, A SPOKESMAN OF THE WEST JAVA SECURITY COMMAND (LAKSUS) TOLD THE PRESS THAT LAKSUS HAD AGREED TO A REQUEST FROM ALISYAHBANA THAT TROOPS REMAIN AT THE ITB CAMPUS UNTIL THE END OF MARCH AND THEN BE REMOVED "IN STAGES". THE LAKSUS SPOKESMAN ALSO SAID THAT REGISTRATION FOR THE NEXT TERM AT ITB, PREVIOUSLY POSTPONED FROM EARLY FEBRUARY UNTIL THE 25TH OF THE MONTH, HAD BEEN CONFIDENTIAL

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RESCHEDULED AGAIN FOR FEBRUARY 21. THERE ARE MANY REPORTS THAT AD HOC REGISTRATION IS ALREADY BEING CONDUCTED OFF-CAMPUS, AT THE HOMES AND PRIVATE OFFICES OF FACULTY MEMBERS.

5. THE AMERICAN ARMY STUDENT AT THE INDONESIAN ARMED FORCES COMMAND AND STAFF COLLEGE (SESKOAD), WHO HAS PROVIDED A SERIES OF REPORTS ON THE EVOLVING SITUATION IN BANDUNG, SUGGESTS THAT STUDENT PROVOCATIONS MAY HAVE LED TO THE INJURIES WHICH OCCURRED WHEN THE MILITARY RETURNED TO BANDUNG LAST WEEK. ACCORDING TO SECOND HAND REPORTS WHICH HE HAS GATHERED, STUDENTS PURPOSELY INCITED THE TROOPS WITH OBSCENITIES, AND ONE SOLDIER WAS HIT IN THE FACE BY A BOTTLE, SETTING OFF A MELEE IN WHICH STUDENTS AND TROOPS WERE INJURED.

6. RELIABLE DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS WHO HAVE BEEN IN BANDUNG THIS WEEK REPORT THAT THE "ACADEMIC STRIKE" INITIATED AT ITB HAS SPREAD TO ALL OF BANDUNG'S MAJOR UNIVERSITIES. STUDENTS ARE APPARENTLY USING THE PADJAJARAN UNIVERSITY, WHICH THE AMERICAN SESKOAD STUDENT CONFIRMS IS "ON STRIKE", AS THE CURRENT GATHERING PLACE. STUDENTS THERE

TOLD OUR DIPLOMATIC CONTACTS THAT THEY EXPECT A NEW WAVE OF STUDENT ARRESTS, WITH SOME STUDENTS CLAIMING THAT THEY HAVE INFORMATION THROUGH FAMILY CONNECTIONS IN WEST JAVA (SILIWANGI) MILITARY COMMAND HEADQUARTERS THAT THE ARRESTS WILL OCCUR ON FEBRUARY 22.

7. COMMENT: ALISYAHBANA HAS BEEN A CONTROVERSIAL EDUCATIONAL AND POLITICAL FIGURE, AND HIS OUSTER WILL PROBABLY SPUR MIXED EMOTIONS AMONG STUDENTS, EDUCATORS AND THE POLITICALLY ORIENTED PUBLIC. ONE SOURCE WHO TALKED WITH ALISYAHBANA AND OTHERS AT ITB SHORTLY PRIOR TO THE RECTOR'S OUSTER SAID HIS SUPPORT WAS BY NO MEANS UNANIMOUS, AMONG EITHER STUDENTS OR FACULTY. ALTHOUGH THE FIRING OF THE RECTOR MAY NOT SPUR MAJOR FACULTY
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RESIGNATIONS OR INCITE OPEN STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS, IT WILL KEEP THE ITB POT BOILING. HOW STUDENTS AND SECURITY FORCES INTERACT ON FEBRUARY 21/22 STILL SEEMS THE KEY TO THE SHORT-TERM SITUATION IN BANDUNG.
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